

# AKIRA

13

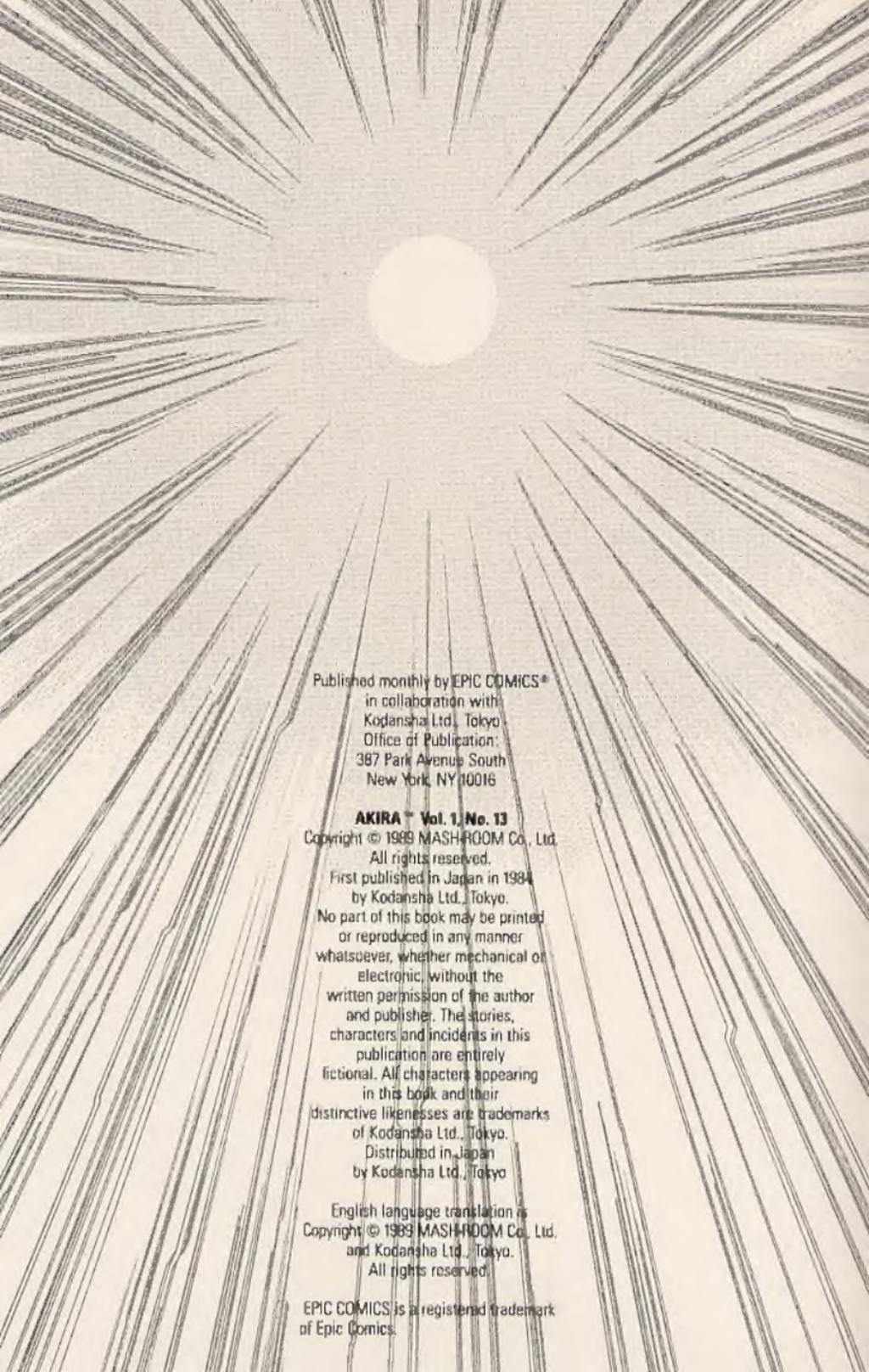
TM



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KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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RECEPTION

# AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

CHAPTER 13

## DESPERATION

# WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo**, plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where the first of the bombs fell thirty-eight years before. There, a band of teenaged delinquents led by **Kaneda** encounter **Number 26**—a terrified child who possesses extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends, then vanishes.

As a result, **Kaneda** and **Tetsuo** become entangled in a power struggle between a mysterious military and scientific organization led by a man known only as the **Colonel** and an underground resistance group, bent on putting a stop to the Colonel's activities.

Among the resistance, **Kaneda** meets **Kay**—a girl he alternately maddens and tries to

seduce—and Kay's "brother", **Ryu**. The leaders of the resistance include **Nezu**—who publically leads the political party that opposes the government—and a powerful religious leader with strong precognitive gifts, **Lady Miyako**.

The **Colonel** has a number of children under his control, each one possessing a distinct set of psychic talents and identified by a number marked on their hand. (**Lady Miyako** was, at one time, Number 19 in this series.) One of the children, the mental giant **Akira**, is so powerful that since the war he has been buried beneath the earth's surface, suspended in cryogenic sleep.

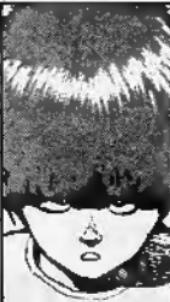
The Colonel's chief medical advisor subjects **Tetsuo** to painful electronic and chemical experiments, awakening tremendous telepathic potential in the boy, who is redubbed **Number 41**. Unfortunately, as his powers appear, a monstrous side of Tetsuo's nature also surfaces. Able to shrug off the most serious injuries, **Tetsuo** goes on a killing spree. He eventually murders one of Kaneda's closest friends and attacks **Kaneda**, who, along with **Kay**, is taken to the Colonel's installation.



Kaneda



Kay



Sakaki



Akira



Unable to tolerate the notion that **Akira** may be more powerful than he is, **Tetsuo** leaves the Colonel's installation, determined to find his rival. The psychic children, like **Lady Miyako**, fear Akira's power and are worried about the disaster Tetsuo may unleash. They use their talents to help **Kaneda** and **Kay** escape, and the pair follow **Tetsuo** to the Olympic site, below which **Akira** rests. There, they are almost reunited with **Ryu**, who is working undercover as a soldier.

Hoping to prevent a disaster, the **Colonel** follows with his troops and scientists. When everyone arrives at the site, fighting breaks out.

**Tetsuo** easily repels attacks by wave after wave of soldiers armed with the most sophisticated weaponry. The

scientists monitoring Akira's cryosleep discover that the temperature in Akira's chamber is beginning to rise. They deduce that even in hibernation, Akira's power is responding to Tetsuo's psychic energy.

Seeking a way out, **Kay** and **Kaneda** instead find their way to Akira's chamber. They watch from hiding as **Tetsuo** heads towards the chamber's entrance.

The **Colonel** orders his troops to fall back, and take cover. Intense cold from the growing cracks in Akira's chamber spills throughout the site, indicating that Akira is close to consciousness. Just as **Tetsuo** reaches Akira's resting place, the cryogenic chamber begins to crack from within, and **Akira** emerges.

The paranormal giant is still dazed and weak with the



Ryu



Kiyoko



The Colonel



Tetsuo

aftereffects of his coma. He is unable to speak, shy of bright lights, and easily ordered about. **Tetsuo** and he begin to make their way to the surface. **Kay** and **Kaneda**, realizing that they must move or perish, also manage to reach the surface. **Ryu** is saved by soldiers who still believe he is one of them.

Terror sweeps the control room, as the **Colonel** tries desperately to prevent panicking. A scientist triggers a Code 7 Emergency Alarm. The civilian defense system kicks in and mayhem takes over on the streets. Neo-Tokyo holds its collective breath waiting for the bombs to fall again.

Terrified of what has been unleashed and determined to act before a greater catastrophe occurs, the **Colonel** summons the powerful **SOL** military satellite and orders that its laser cannon be fired at **Tetsuo** and **Akira**. The two boys are separated by the blasts. **Akira** is saved by **Kay** and **Kaneda**. **Tetsuo** is less fortunate, the laser strikes his left arm.

Neo-Tokyo is placed in a state of military emergency following the disaster. Backing up the troops are "caretaker" robots who patrol the streets, dealing harshly with looters and

restoring order. The **Colonel**—managing to conceal the truth about what has occurred, despite leaks to the media—plans to use the emergency as an excuse to hunt down and destroy the resistance once and for all.

**Lady Miyako**, warns **Nezu** to hold his people in reserve. She then calls upon **Sakaki**, a young girl trained in techniques of infiltration, observation, and combat, and asks her to find **Akira**.

**Kay** and **Kaneda** take shelter with **Chiyoko**, a formidable woman in the resistance. Without Kaneda's knowledge, **Kay** meets with **Nezu** and agrees to turn the still-somnolent **Akira** over to him. When **Ryu**, still recovering from the frostbite he suffered at the Olympic site, also reports to **Nezu**, who chooses not to bring him up to date on the status of **Akira**. He also denies any knowledge of Kay's whereabouts.

**Sakaki** follows **Kay** back to Chiyoko's hideout, where she rouses **Akira** and leads him away. **Kaneda** is unable to stop **Sakaki**, but manages to alert **Kay** and **Chiyoko**.

**Sakaki** and **Akira** safely reach the street...and are cornered by caretaker robots.



Takashi



Lady Miyako



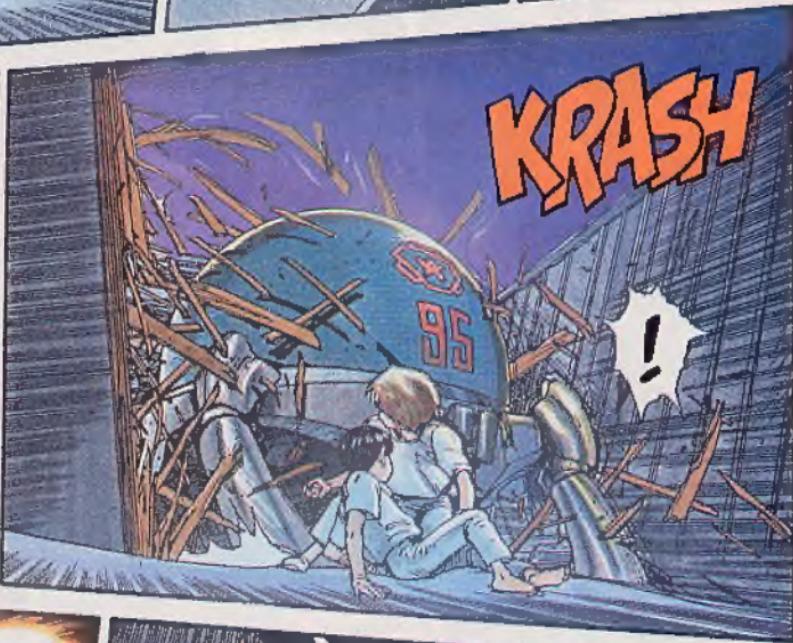
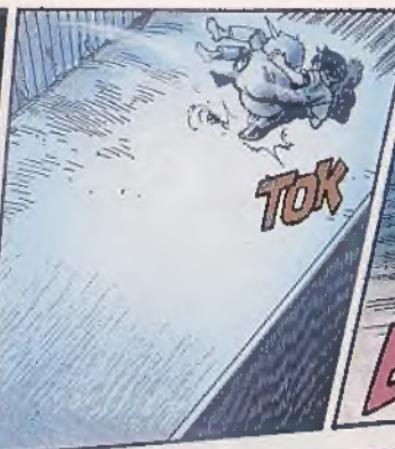
Nezu



Chiyoko







TAUD THAK

BHOON

WHIRR  
KLIK  
-TPI-

TAK  
TAK

CHARGE!

WARNING!  
WARNING!

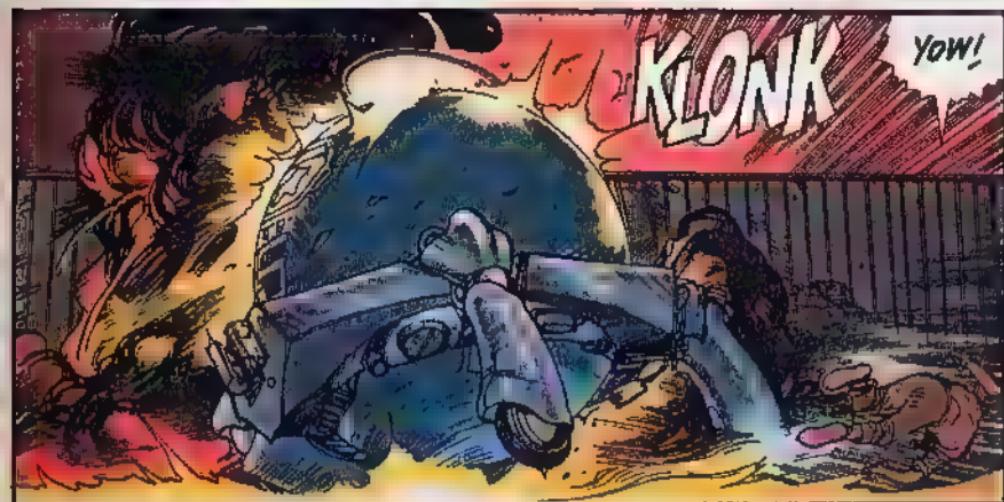
ZAT  
ZAT

ANY ATTEMPT  
TO BREACH THE  
PEACE WILL BE  
SEVERELY  
PUNISHED!

NOW!

SMACK

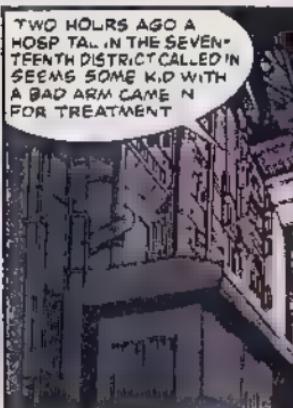
BLAM





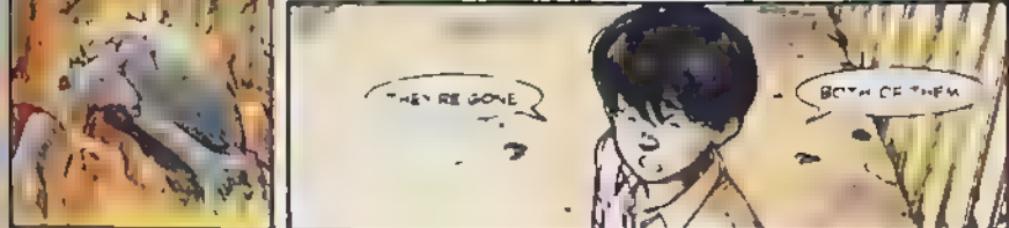
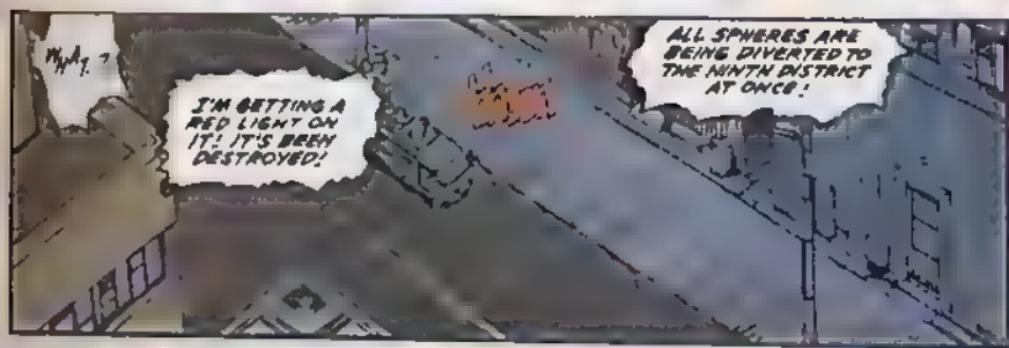
PLEASE  
DESCRIBE  
THEM.

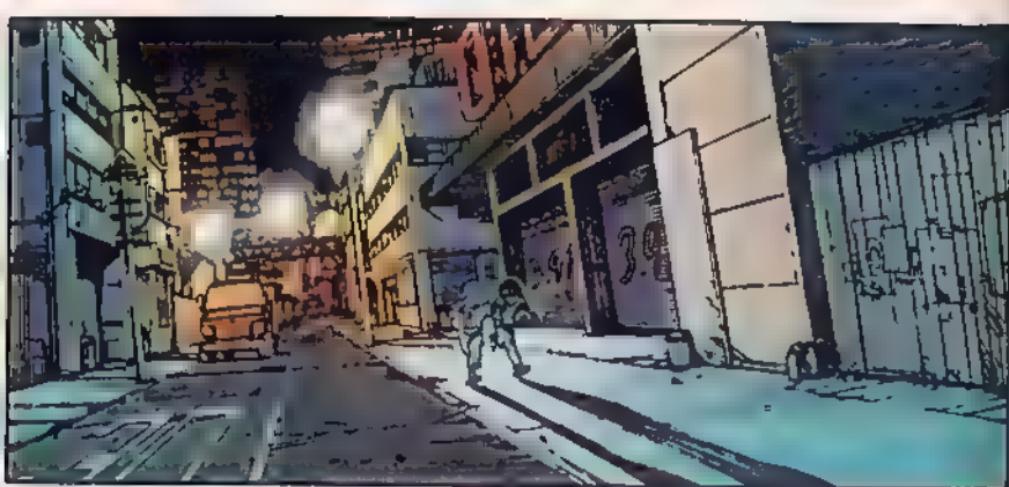
29 DRUNKEN BRAWLS,  
18 MISSING PERSONS,  
43 CURFEW VIOLATIONS.

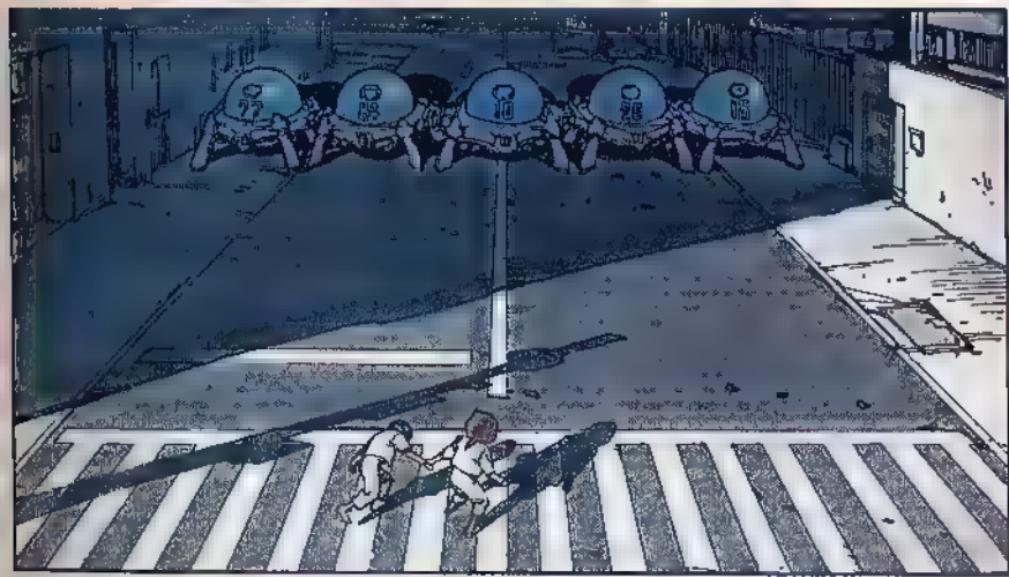


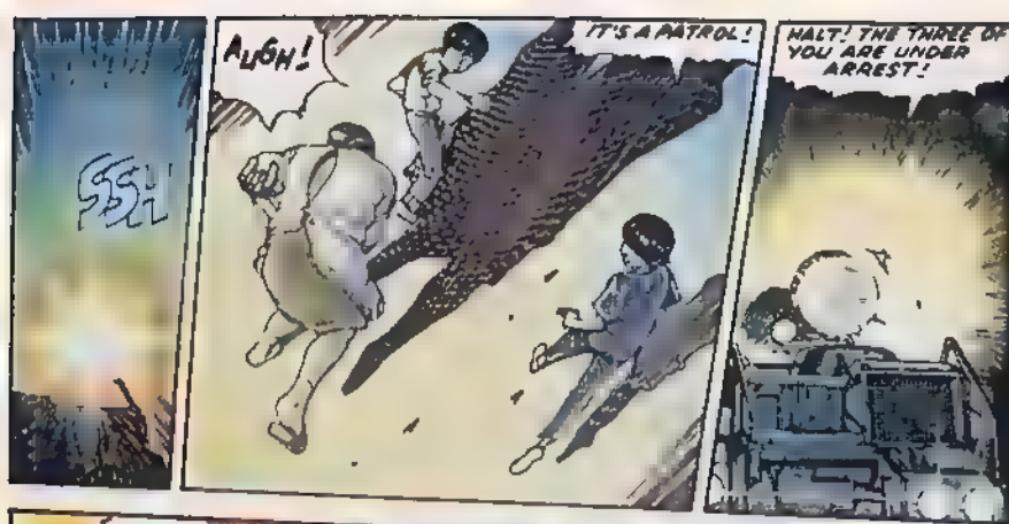


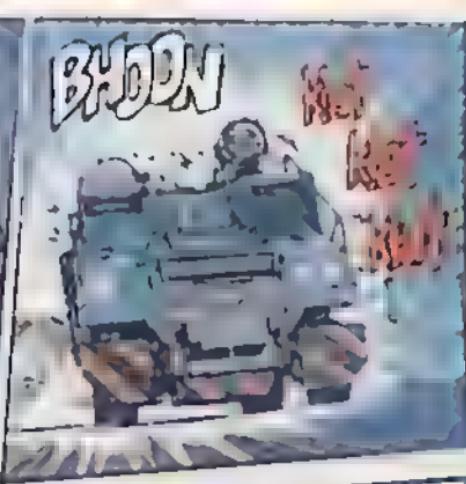
THERE'S A SIGNAL  
COMING IN FROM  
SPHERE #95,  
PATROLLING THE  
NINTH DISTRICT.



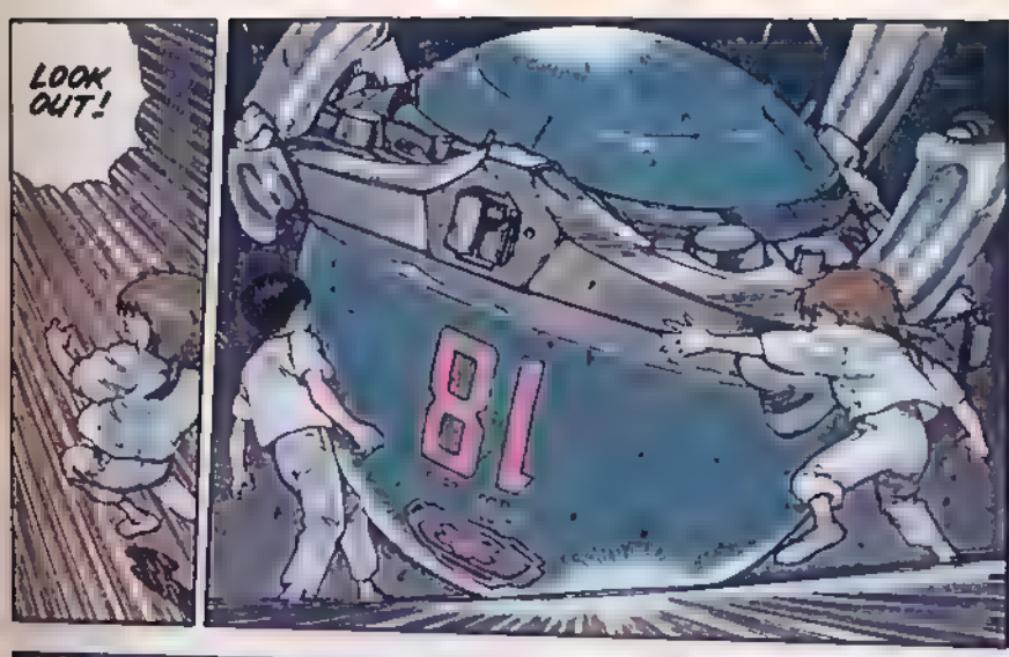


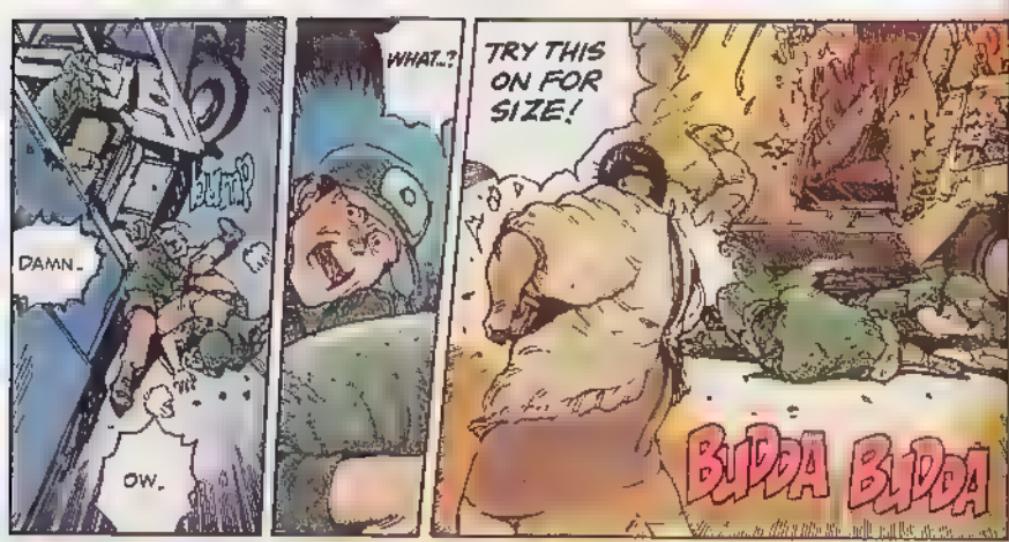




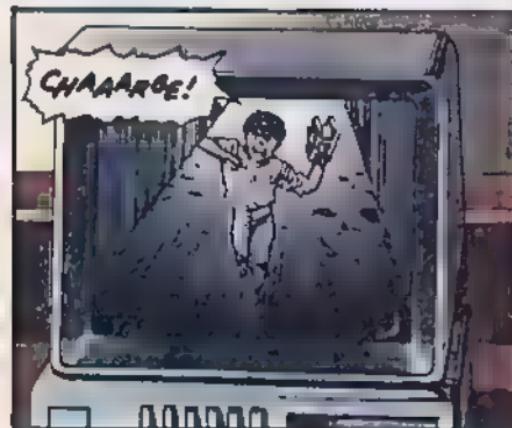
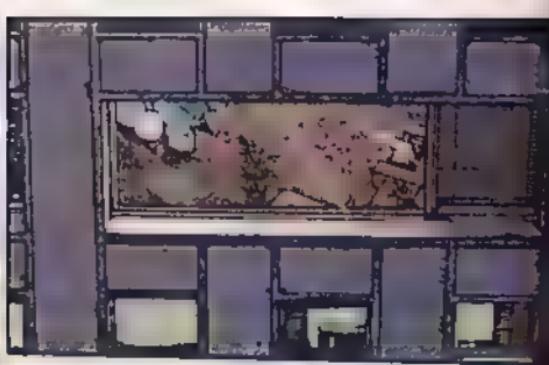
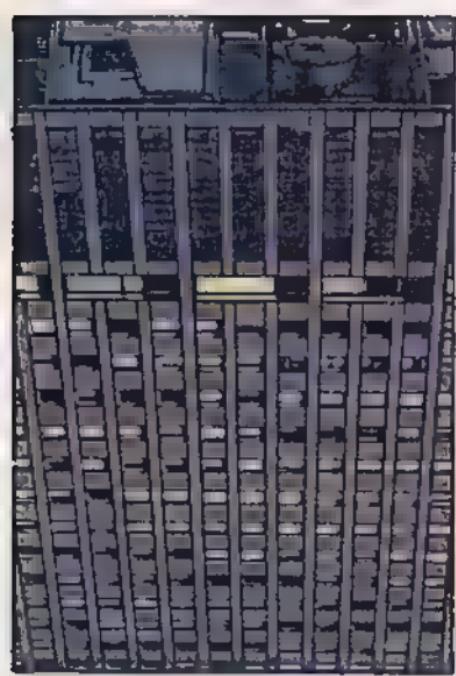
















MR NEZU, THERE'S  
A CALL FROM A YOUNG  
WOMAN NAMED KAY.  
SHE INSISTS ON  
SPEAKING WITH YOU  
DIRECTLY. SHE SAYS  
IT'S URGENT.



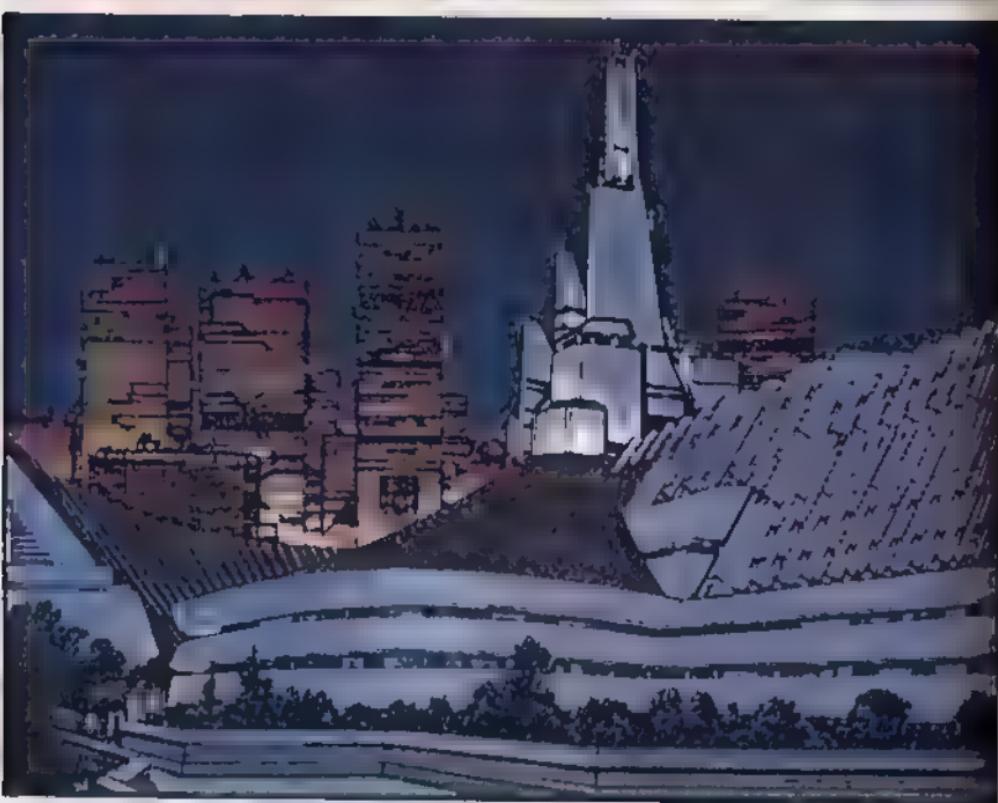
PLT HER  
THROUGH







LADY MIYAKO EXPECTS YOU NOW!



I'VE BROUGHT MR NEZU

LADY MIYAKO IS WAITING IN THE HALL OF WORSHIP





... A GIRL  
CALLED KAY, AND  
A BIG WOMAN  
NAMED CH YOKO  
WHO'S IN CHARGE  
OF THEIR WEAPONRY.

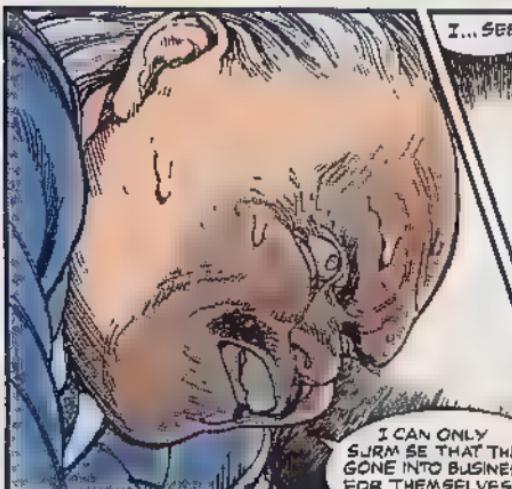


TH-THEM?  
I ADMIT, THEY  
WORKED FOR ME  
ONCE, BUT THAT  
WAS IN THE  
PAST

WE SEVERED  
OUR TIES WITH THEM  
DURING A RECENT  
REORGANIZATION



THERE WAS  
ANOTHER ONE,  
A BOY I D'NT  
RECOGNIZE

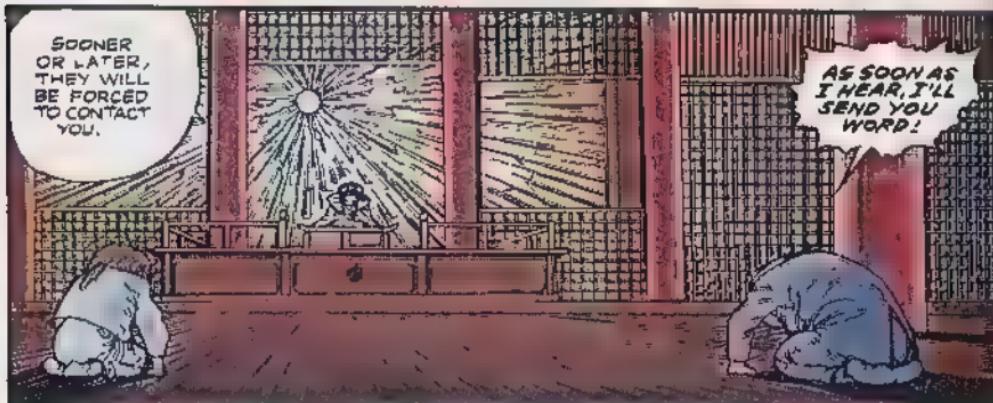


I... SEE



WELL, EVEN WITH  
AKIRA IN THEIR  
POSSESSION,  
THEY'RE NOT N  
A POSITION TO  
EXPLOIT HIM  
WITHOUT HELP

I CAN ONLY  
SURMISE THAT THEY'VE  
GONE INTO BUSINESS  
FOR THEMSELVES



SOONER  
OR LATER,  
THEY WILL  
BE FORCED  
TO CONTACT  
YOU.

AS SOON AS  
I HEAR, I'LL  
SEND YOU  
WORD!

ALL MEN ...

.. ARE BORN WITH CERTAIN CAPABILITIES AND CERTAIN LIMITATIONS. AND EVEN A MAN OF GREAT LIMITATIONS MAY IMAGINE HIMSELF A MAN OF GREAT CAPABILITY

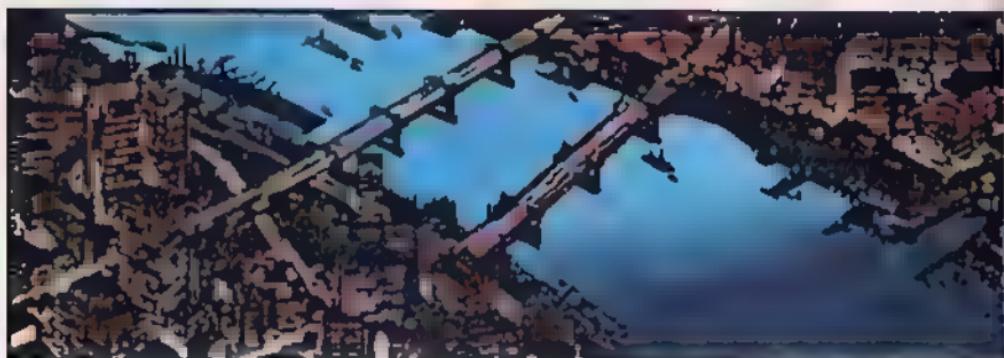
IF SUCH A MAN FOUND WITHIN HIS GRASP AN OBJECT OF GREAT POWER... IT WOULD BE USELESS, BEYOND HIS ABILITY TO CONTROL IN HIS HANDS THAT OBJECT WOULD BE WASTED AND COME TO NOTHING!

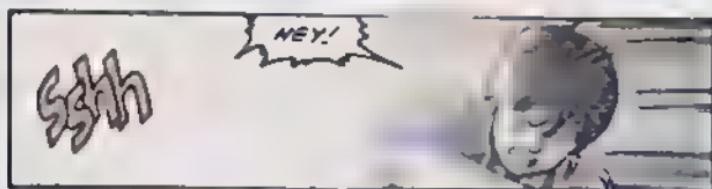
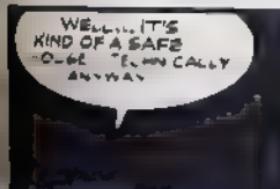
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I AM SAYING, LITTLE MOUSE?

YOU MAY GO NOW

YES, MY LADY!

THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR WISDOM. I WON'T FORGET IT

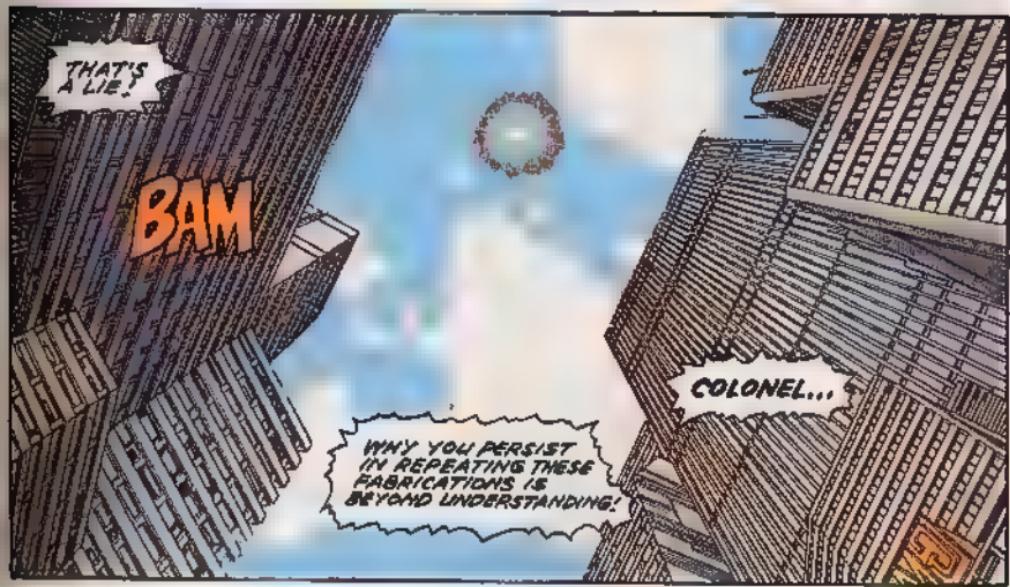




MY NAME IS KAY! WE'VE  
BROUGHT YOU AKIRA!

Ssh





AKIRA HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED! YOU'VE ALL SEEN THE VIDEO!

KIDNAPPED BY CHILDREN! WHAT YOU FAILED TO DO IS PRESENT ANY EVIDENCE THAT THE PEOPLE WE SAW POSE A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY.



I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT! I KNOW AKIRA, AND I KNOW THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE HIM!

IF WE DON'T ACT QUICKLY, IT WILL BE TOO LATE! GIVE ME BACK MY COMMAND!

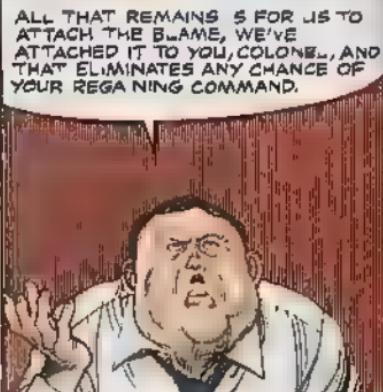
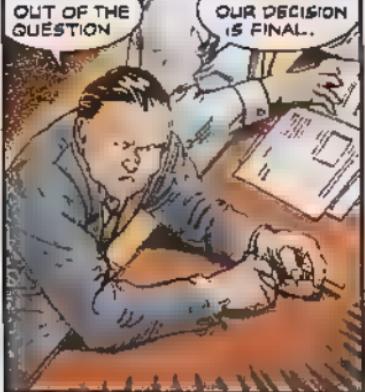


OUT OF THE QUESTION

OUR DECISION IS FINAL.

AKIRA IS OFFICIALLY DEAD, KILLED BY SOL.

ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR US TO ATTACH THE BLAME, WE'VE ATTACHED IT TO YOU, COLONEL, AND THAT ELIMINATES ANY CHANCE OF YOUR REGAINING COMMAND.

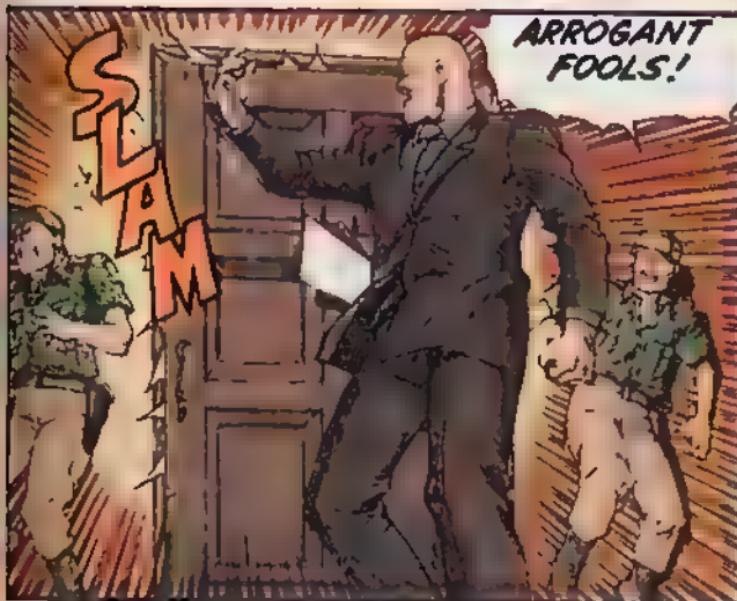


AKIRA IS SOMEWHERE IN NEO-TOKYO! DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT THAT MEANS?! WE'RE ON THE BRINK OF CATASTROPHE!

YOU MUST REINSTATE THE CODE SEVEN EMERGENCY ALERT! FIND AKIRA WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME!



# SCRAPE



CONTACT THE LEADERS  
OF EVERY UNIT. WE'LL  
MEET TONIGHT AT  
MY HOUSE.

??

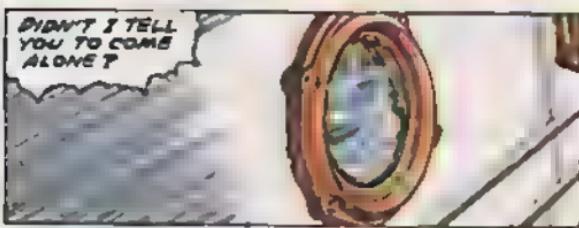
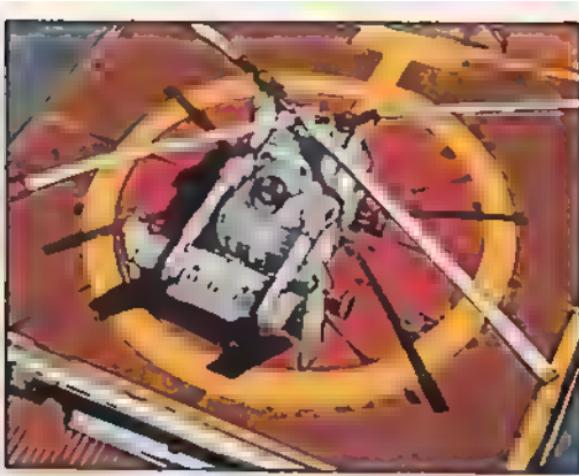
I'LL NEED AT LEAST 70%  
OF THEM IN ATTENDANCE.  
IF ANYONE CLAIMS HE CAN'T  
COME, HAVE HIM SWEAR AN  
OATH OF LOYALTY AND HAVE  
SOMEONE YOU'RE SURE OF  
TAIL HIM AT ALL TIMES. THIS  
MUST REMAIN ABSOLUTELY  
**TOP SECRET**  
...UNDERSTOOD?

YES, COLONEL!

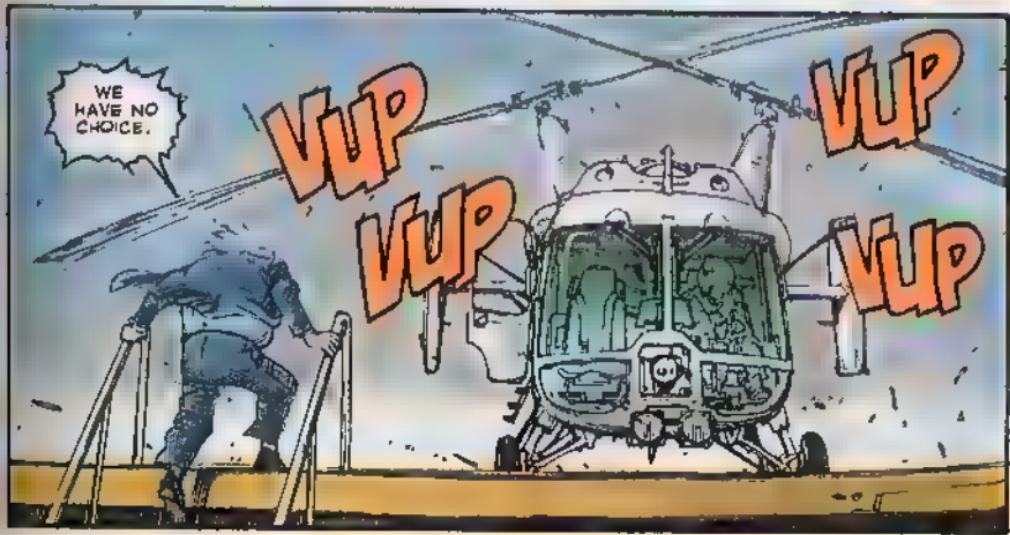
I...OVERHEARD WHAT  
HAPPENED, SIR. AND  
THEY CALL THEM-  
SELVES LEADERS!  
WHAT A FIASCO!

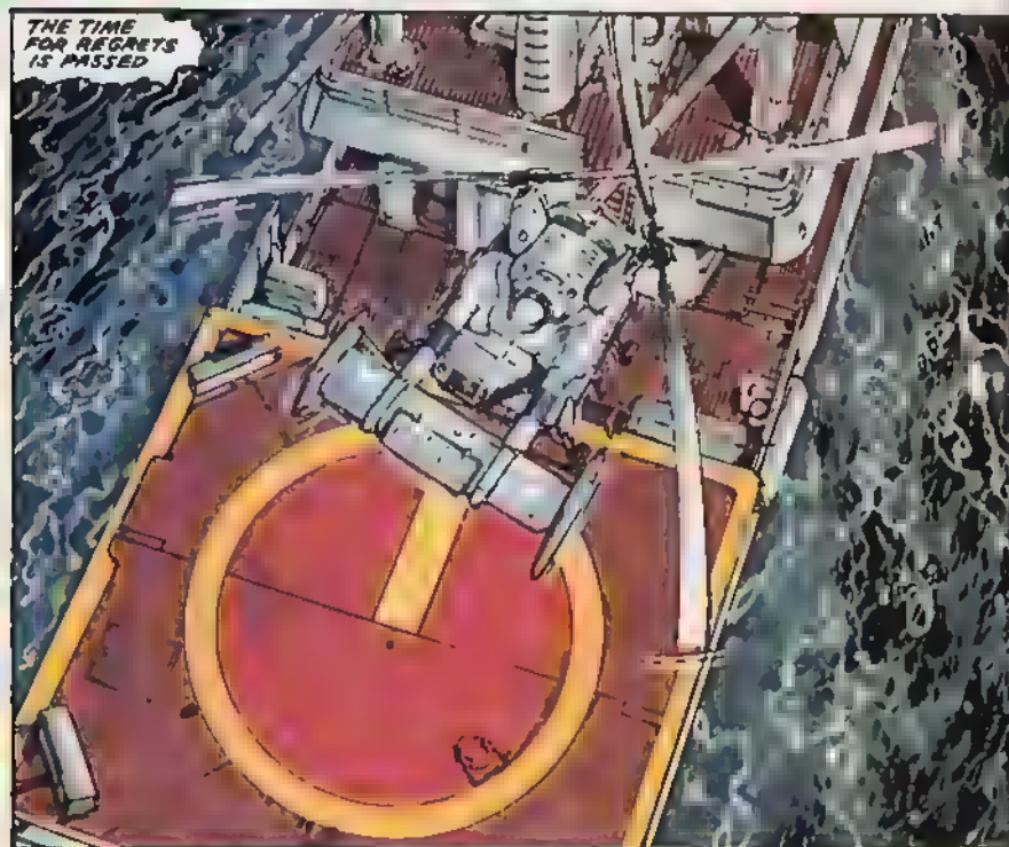
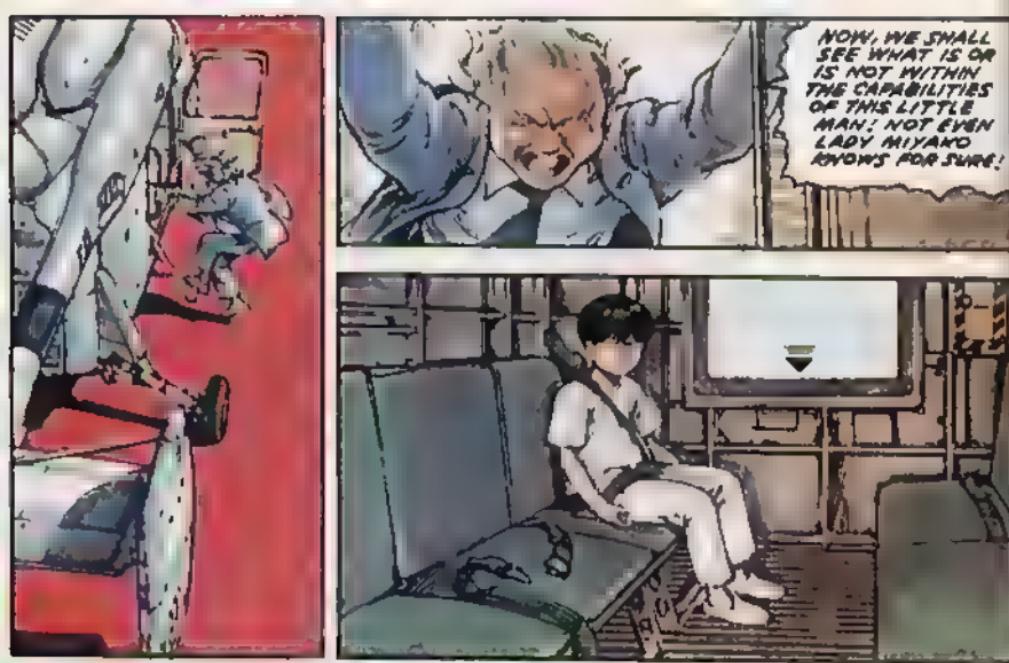
I HAVE BETTER THINGS  
TO DO THAN LISTEN TO  
YOU CHATTER. GO!

YESSIR!

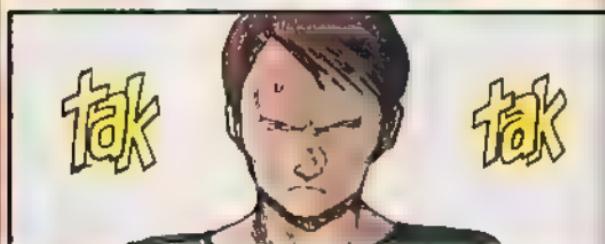














IT PAYS TO BE CAREFUL, OTHERWISE WE COULD END UP DEAD.

Y'KNOW, IT'S REALLY GOOD.



WHAT  
ARE  
YOU--?

OH!!

KEEP  
BACK

IT'S FOR A  
GREAT  
CAUSE.

MR NEZU  
DOESN'T BELIEVE  
IN NEGLECTING  
EVEN THE  
SMALLEST  
DETAILS.

NEZU--??

YOU'LL BE  
JOINING YOUR  
FRIENDS NOW.

BANG

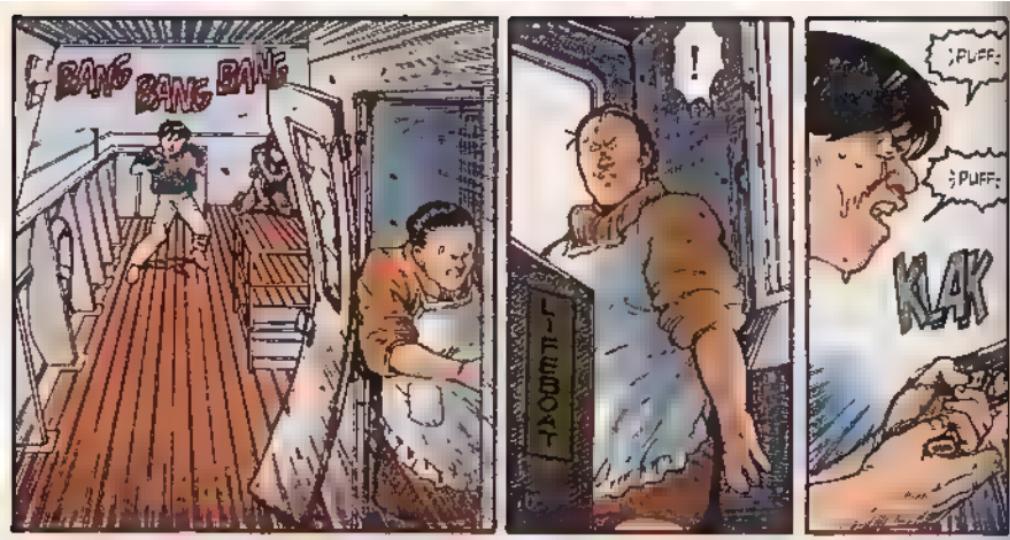
HE  
BETRAYED  
US!



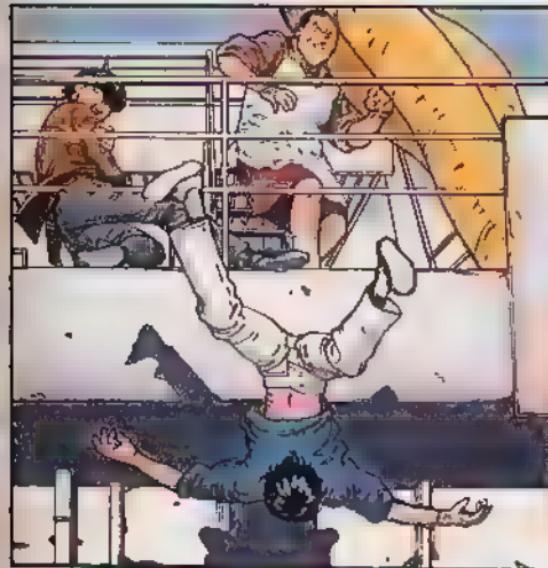


SORRY ABOUT THAT  
DON T WORRY I  
WON T MISS AGAIN

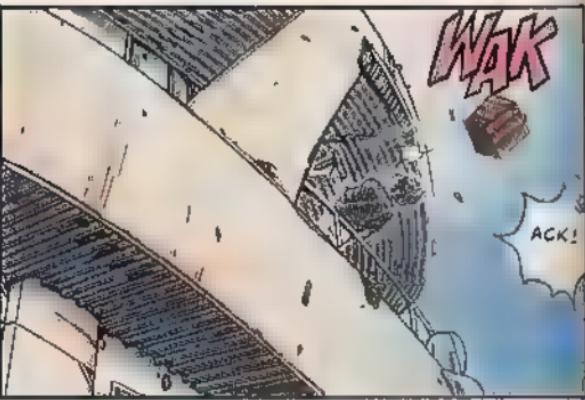




BAP



GROSS!!

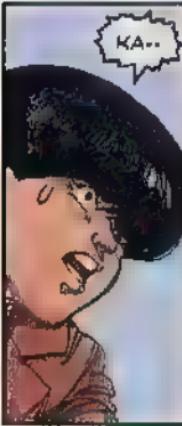


KA...

--KANEDA!

EKOFF

GIKE THAT'S BETTER.



ARE YOU OKAY?



I WAS STILL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHETHER OR NOT THEY'D POISONED ME

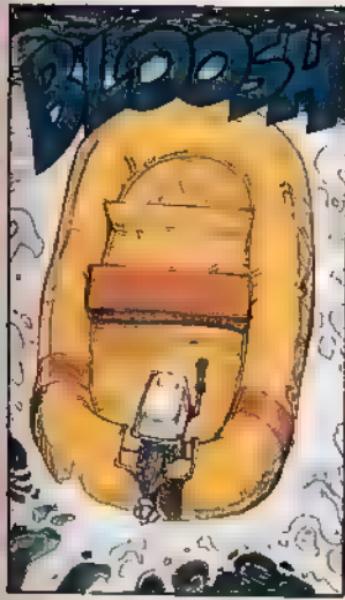
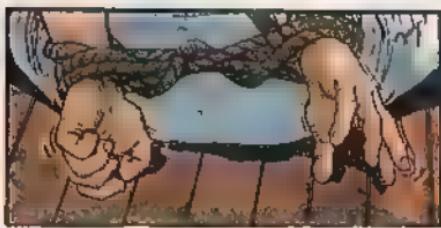
.. WHEN I GOT ROYALLY SEASICK.

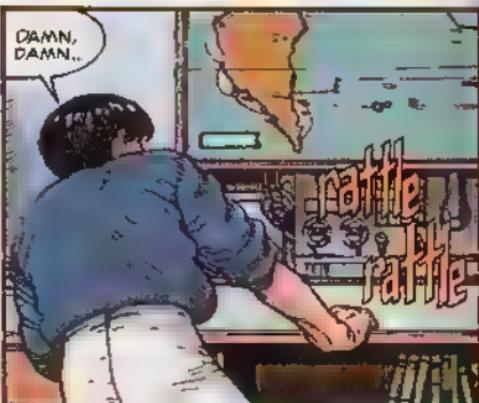
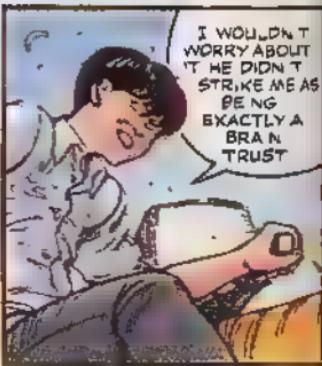


I HATE THIS!

Puke!







WHEN  
WAS IT?

LAST  
NIGHT.

HERE ARE THE  
NAMES OF THOSE  
WHO ATTENDED.

THEY WEREN'T SIMPLE  
ENLISTED MEN

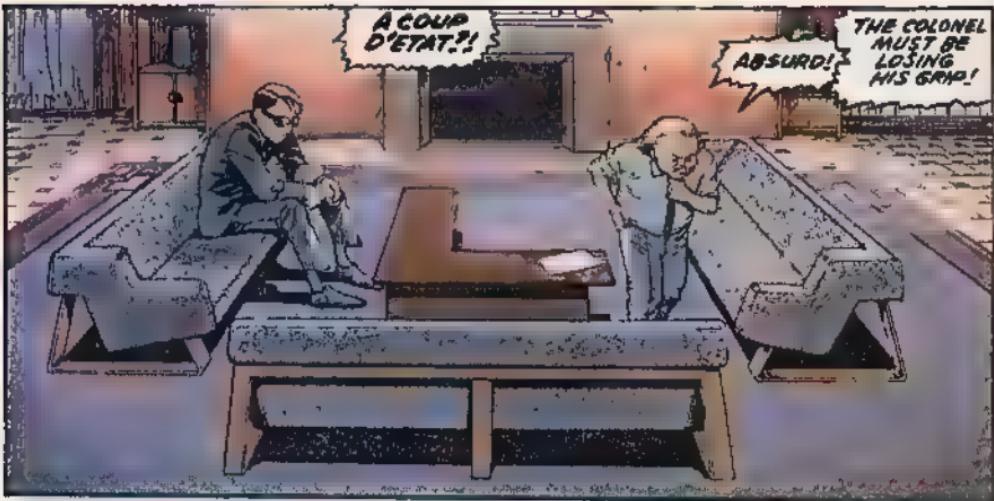
EACH OF THEM COMMANDS  
AT LEAST A UNIT DOES THE  
GOVERNMENT KNOW  
ABOUT THIS

INCREDIBLE

THE  
MEETING  
WAS  
CLAN-  
DESTINE

THE  
GOVERNMENT  
KNOWS  
NOTHING.

GENERAL	AF
JN - (Units)	AB
JNP - (Units)	AC
JPV - (Units)	AD
PPV - (Units)	AE
PPV - (Units)	AT
PPV - (Units)	AV
PPV - (Units)	AW
PPV - (Units)	AX



YOU LET THEM GET AWAY???



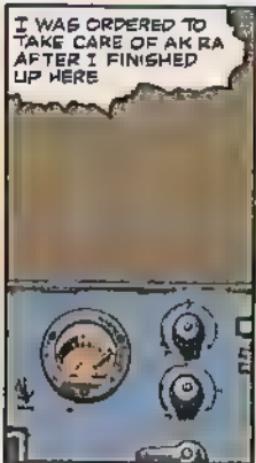
I'M SORRY I PROMISE TO MAKE IT UP TO YOU!



YOU MORON! HOW COULD YOU  
LET A WOMAN AND TWO KIDS  
GET THE BETTER OF YOU?



I WAS ORDERED TO  
TAKE CARE OF AK RA  
AFTER I FINISHED  
UP HERE



WHERE IS  
HE NOW?



NINCOMPOOP!



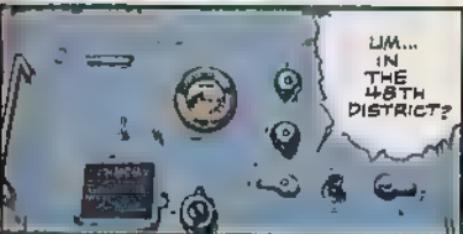
HE'S AT  
MR. NEZU'S  
HOME!



THE  
ELEVENTH  
DISTRICT!



UM...  
IN  
THE  
48TH  
DISTRICT?





YOU HAVE  
SOMETHING  
DONE RIGHT

TAK  
TAK

AT A  
TIME  
LIVE THE

YOU HAVE  
TO DO IT  
YOURSELF

SEND  
MY CAR  
AROUND!

NOW!



EYU!

I "THOUGHT" KAY MUST  
HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH  
WITH YOU BY NOW.  
SHE'S WITH A WOMAN  
NAMED CHIYOKO.

HAVE YOU  
HEARD FROM  
HER YET?

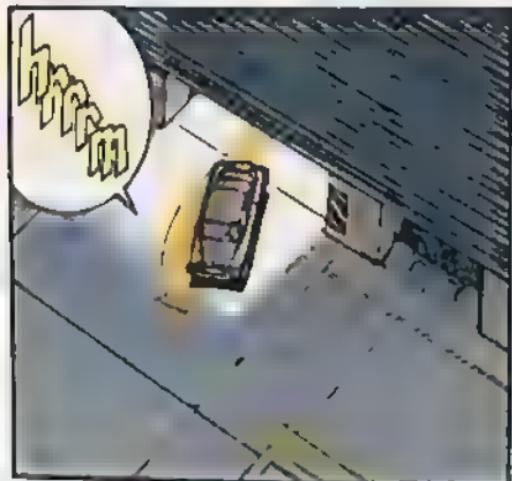
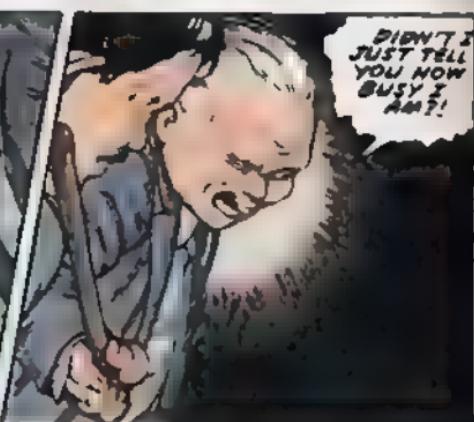


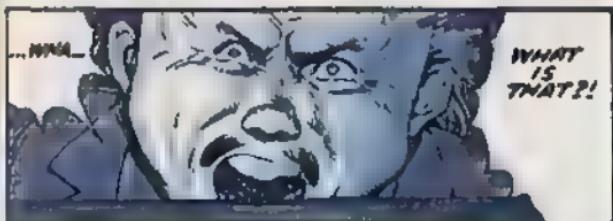
NO, I HAVEN'T!  
I'M VERY BUSY!

BUT MY  
SOURLES SAY  
CHIYOKO HAS  
TRYING TO  
REACH YOU.



**SNOOSH**







DON T  
STOP THE  
ENGINE FOR  
ANYTH NG, AND  
BE PREPARED  
TO MOVE  
ON  
MY  
SIGNAL.

YES, SIR.



DON T YOU  
KNOW  
THERE S  
A CURFEW ON?  
IF YOU HAVE A  
PERMIT TO BE  
OUT AT TH.S  
HOUR YOU BETTER  
LET ME SEE  
T.

CER-  
TAINLY



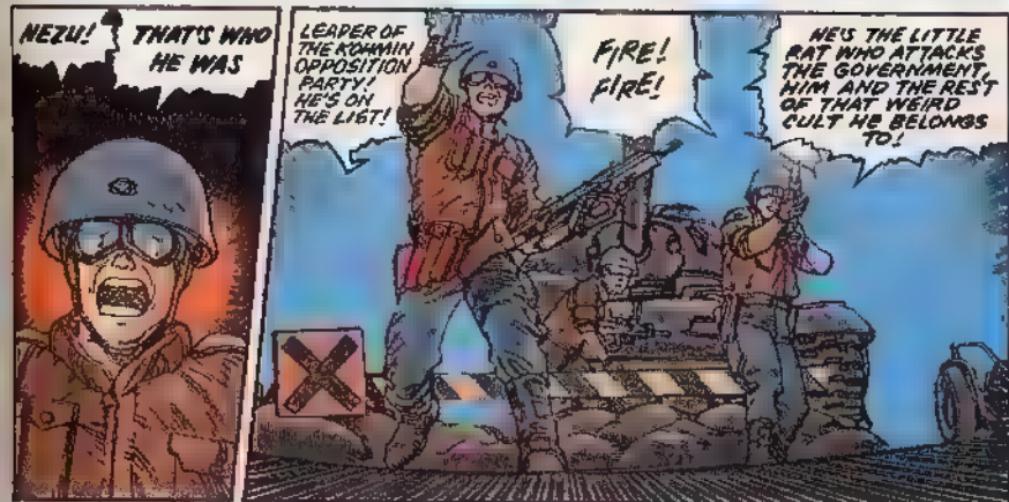
HMM..

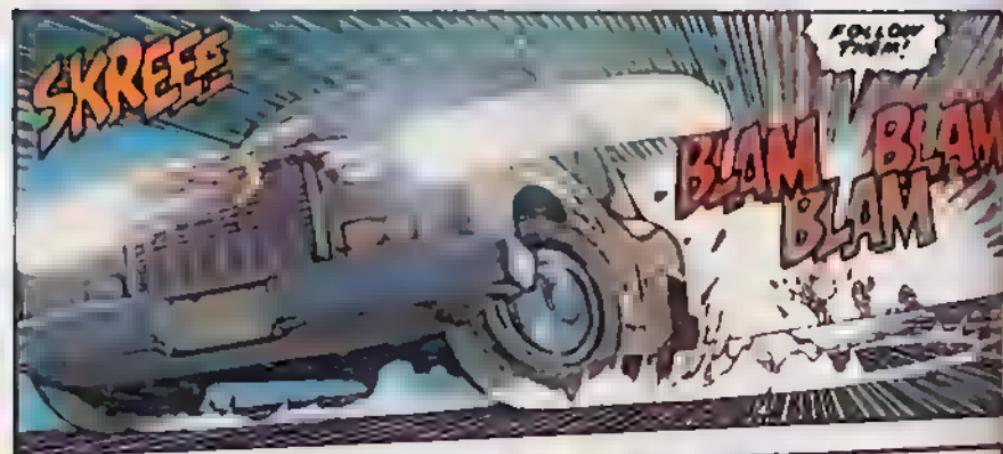
ARE YOU WITH  
THE GOVERNMENT?



I COULD SWEAR  
I'VE SEEN YOUR  
FACE BEFORE  
OPEN UP

nok  
nok



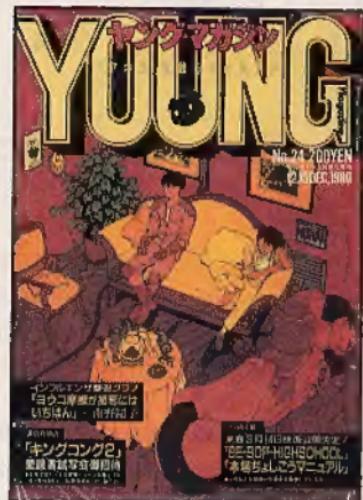


NEXT ISSUE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

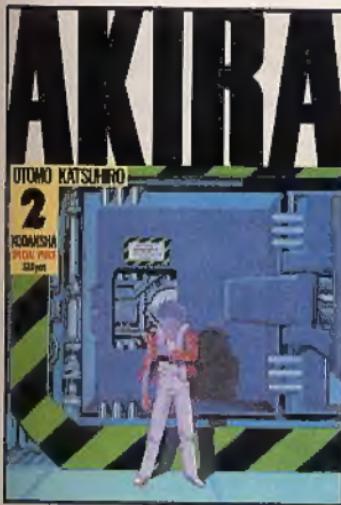
# THE MAKING OF AKIRA THE EPIC COMIC PART I

The publishing of Katsuhiro Otomo's **Akira** in the United States requires much more time and effort than a standard comic book reprint. Before American audiences see the final product, it has gone through a complex "Westernization" procedure.

In Japan, **Akira** is first serialized in 20 page black-and-white installments in Kodansha Ltd.'s **Young Magazine**. **Young Magazine** is a 300-page weekly aimed at high school and college students.



An issue of Kodansha Ltd.'s **Young Magazine** from December, 1986.



The second of five Japanese volumes of **Akira**.

The serialized installments are collected into volumes of 300 to 400 pages each. A fifth and final volume is forthcoming, bringing the total number of pages in **Akira** up to 1800. The sales of these volumes in Japan have been phenomenal—the completed **Akira** saga will have a total of three and a half million copies in print.



An original page from Kodansha's *Akira* (left); a colored page from the Epic version (right).

Archie Goodwin, former Editor-in-Chief of Epic Comics, together with the staff of Kodansha, divided the volumes into 64 page sections for publication. Kodansha then provided "clean proofs" of the artwork.

Japanese comics are designed for lettering that reads vertically. Before sending the artwork to Epic, Mash•Room Co., Ltd., Otomo's own studio, removes all Japanese lettering, sound effects, and dialogue balloons.

The artwork is reversed through a camera process, so that **Akira** will reproduce from left to right. New artwork replaces the dialogue and sound effect balloons, and eventually new balloons will be drawn to hold horizontal lettering. The clean "mirror" proofs are then sent to Epic, along with the script translation.

Next month we will examine the translation, adaptation, and scripting process.

**KATSUHIRO OTOMO**

writer/illustrator

**YASUMITSU SUETAKE**

chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

**MAKOTO SHIOSAKI**

**SATOSHI TAKABATAKE**

assistants to Mr. Otomo

**HIROSHI HIRATA**

designer • AKIRA calligraphy

**AKIRA SAITO**

designer • Kodansha edition

Kodansha Ltd

**YOKO UMEZAWA**

with LINDA M. YORK

translation

**KOICHI YURI**

editor • Kodansha edition

**YUKA ANDO**

editorial coordinator • Tokyo

**NORIYUKI OKAZAKI**

managing editor • New York

Epic Comics

**JO DUFFY**

english adaptation

**STEVE OLIFF**

with

**GLORIA VASQUEZ**

colorists

**MICHAEL HIGGINS**

letterer

**HARRY CANDELARIO • STEVE ALEXANDROV**

production

**MARIE JAVINS**

assistant editor

**MARGARET CLARK**

editor

**CARL POTTS**

executive editor

T

here is a shrill sound that fills the air

and beats against the soul. It is the sound of panic that grips the terrified citizens of Neo-Tokyo. It is the sound of the caretaker robots who carry out their orders to "protect" regardless of who they destroy. It is the sound of gunfire that rattles against the asphalt as the struggle for who will control Akira rages. It is the sound of double speak shrieking against all logic as a government scrambles for high ground. It is sound and fury all for nothing against the power of Akira.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA



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13